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TAGS: PREL PHUM UNSC BM

SUBJECT: P-3 DISCUSSION ON NEXT STEPS IN BURMA

Classified By: Ambassador Alejandro Wolff, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) UK DPR Pierce convened the P-3 on May 16 on instructions from London to discuss informally possible contingencies for Burma, including the prospects for a regionally led air and sea operation combined with Western assistance. She also proposed arranging some type of meeting on the Burma efforts in New York early next week (likely May 20) in order to maintain focus on the crisis. One option is for Secretary-General Ban to request a follow-up meeting to his May 14 meeting, which would be open to NGOs. Pierce said UK PR Sawers had already reached out to Ban's office on this idea. Alternatively, she suggested an ad hoc meeting chaired by UK Foreign Secretary Miliband, who will be in New York next week for a previously scheduled Council debate on peacebuilding (note: the UK holds the Presidency of the Security Council this month). The UK could also arrange an Arria-style meeting (an informal meeting of the Council with NGOs and others). She remarked that the events over the next few days - U/SYG Holmes' imminent trip to Burma as well as the May 19 ASEAN foreign ministers meeting - would influence next steps.

¶2. (C) Ambassador Wolff said that given the tremendous human toll in Burma, the main objective is to save lives, and cautioned against action that would endanger that process. He supported the UK proposal for a meeting in New York next week, and suggested that the UK may want to consider more Council involvement in the meeting depending on the results of U/SYG Holmes' visit as well as the ASEAN meeting. Wolff also noted the changing dynamics of the crisis and the regime's possible vulnerability (and liability) for its continued neglect of the needs of its own people.

¶3. (C) French DPR LaCroix said that FM Kouchner maintains that the international community has the right to protect the Burmese people. He added that Security Council action should be "kept on the table to get ready for a worst case scenario." He was supportive of a meeting on the situation in Burma early next week and agreed with Ambassador Wolff that the format should reflect developments over the weekend.

He said that France's focus in the next 48 hours, however, would be on its navy ship Mistral, which is carrying food and medicine and is currently in the region exploring "every possible means" to gain access to Burma.

Khalilzad